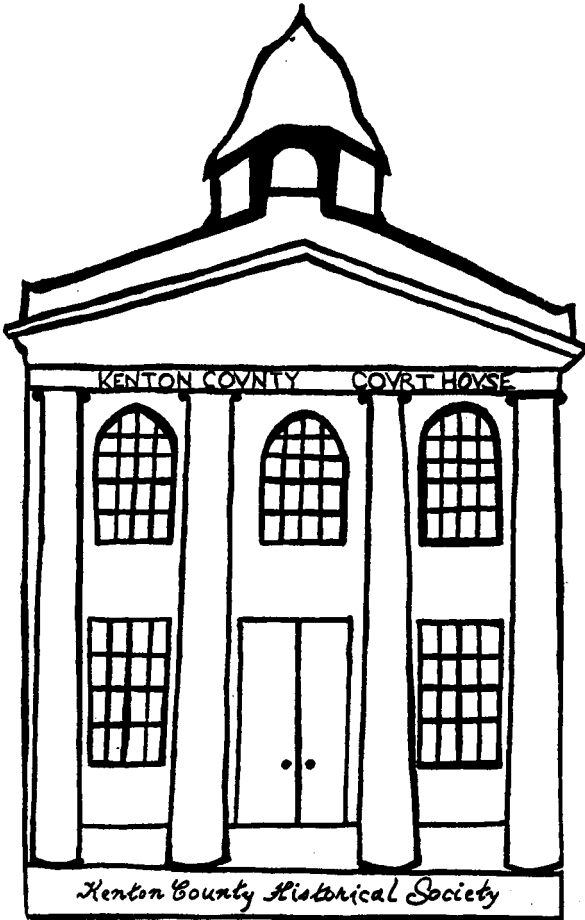


KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(organized in 1977; non-profit;
member, Historical Confederation
of Kentucky)



June 1993

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

On Tuesday, June 8th, 7:00 p. m., at the Kenton County Public Library (Erlanger branch), Carolyn Clark will speak on...

THE LIFE AND CAREER OF PIGMEAT JARRETT.

Jarrett, a musical friend of Louis Armstrong, has had a notable career as a Blues musician. Jarrett still plays in a neighborhood bar. And Jarrett has spent adult years residing in Covington.

Jarrett will be on hand and may have an opportunity to play on the piano usually kept in the Library meeting room.

Carolyn Clark, Jarrett's manager, is also writing a biography.

The program will be sponsored by the Kenton County Historical Society and will be free and open to the public.

Tuesday, June 8th

7:00 p. m.

Kenton county Public Library

Erlanger branch

3130 Dixie Highway (next to Krogers)

BEHRINGER CRAWFORD MUSEUM

Current exhibit: "Seeds of Change," scheduled from March 27 through June 13 in the Hubbard and Cohen Galleries. Tuesday-Saturday/10:00 a. m. to 5:00 p. m. Sunday/1:00 p. m. to 5:00 p. m. When Columbus made contact with the New World, he initiated an exchange which involved, among other things, disease, horses, sugar, potatoes, and corn. This special exhibit was brought to Behringer Crawford through the National Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution.

ALEXANDER L. GREER

"But War's grim visage reared its head....Kentucky's attempted neutrality was overcome....The dauntless John Morgan and Kirby Smith kept the Northern occupants guessingOne day an alarm was sounded. One of our citizens... came flying into town on horseback. 'To arms! To arms! the rebels are advancing!'....Early citizens will recall the portly form of Mr. Alexander Greer as not conducive to expediting the breathless horse as he was urging frantically."
-Eleanor Childs Meehan, An Octogenarian's Personal Recollections... 'Old Covington' (1922)

By the time of the Civil War, Greer was a well-to-do former town councilman, a merchant, a financier of the city's railroad and other developments, who then was defending property citizens, and family including wife Nancy Cox Greer, sons James and John, daughters Laurena, Emma, and Endora. Although he came later than others, he was still one of the Northern Kentucky's founding fathers.

Alexander Greer was born in Ireland, May 1807, settled in Campbell county a decade or so later, and died at his residence located on present-day Greer street in 1884. His widowed mother had brought her children from Ireland to the Ohio valley. Then Covington had a population of 200-300; when Greer died it numbered over 40,000 (Daily Commonwealth, 11-25-84).

Services were conducted from his residence by Rev. William Taylor of the Scott street M. E. church where Greer had belonged for "forty years." Masons and other friends attended. Pallbearers included respected personalities: John G. Carlisle, Speaker of the House of Representatives; John W. Stevenson, former Kentucky Governor; C. B. Simrall, corporate attorney (whose brother William Ferguson had married Laurena Greer); Wm. Ernst, Cashier, Northern Bank of Kentucky; Charles H. Fisk, attorney with his father John (a former State Senator); J. B. Jones, Cashier, City National Bank (n. w. corner of Fourth and Scott streets); R. K. Tarvin, Bookkeeper, City National Bank; John Lehman and W. C. Carpenter, merchants. Greer is buried in Highland Cemetery (Daily Commonwealth 11-10-84).

Possibly one of Greer's very first land transactions occurred when he and two partners purchased some land at the Licking river from James Taylor, a founder of Newport (DB H, p. 509, September 5, 1831). In the 1830s he also acquired other real estate in the county, and in Covington,

portions (or whole) lots including 90, 143, 144, 145, 163, 170, 229, 268 in the city's original plat, some from original owners. Several were purchased in partnership with his younger brother, Thomas (Court records, Alexandria, Ky).

Indeed his brother Thomas had purchased a portion of lot 170 for \$200, then sold it to him for \$210.00 (DB I, p. 240 and 231). Located at the southeast corner of Scott and Market (now Park) Place, this is where an 1834 street directory listed A. L. as merchant and Thomas as clerk. Eventually lot 170 held the three-story "Greer building," also known as Greer Hall, which was used for public dancing and other functions, and which was occupied, for instance, by the Women's Temperance League, rent free, thanks to Mr. Greer (Newport Local, 4-5-79). But then years later it was ready "to collapse" (Cincinnati Post, 7-30-96). Then in 1897 The Kentucky Post reported, that although a "landmark" for being over 50 years old, and once the only "public hall of any size in Covington," it would shortly be torn down by its new owner, Bradford Shinkle (son of Amos). It would be replaced by another grand building which would house stores on the first floor, a "large hall" on the second, and modern apartments on the third (Kentucky Post, 1-4-97).

Lot 229 on the northeast corner of Fifth and Scott streets also became prime real estate; besides newspapers, print shops, etc. the city's post office was once located there (1877 city atlas), and the building there remains impressive in appearance and function to this day. As partial settlement of Greer's estate, Bradford Shinkle also acquired this property (DB 121, p. 1, 11-18-96).

In these years Greer also acquired pieces of the old 580 acre James Riddle farm which had occupied most of today's Mainstrasse, and which had been reclaimed from Riddle by the Bank of the United States, and was then being subdivided. One of these pieces, a nine and one-half acre parcel located between Philadelphia and Main and Pike and West Ninth, was known during the Bank's ownership for its mill. On August 8, 1839 was recorded a transaction whereby William Yorke split ownership with Greer and Mathew McMurtry (DB O, p. 225). In the 1834 directory McMurtry was a "millwright" located on Scott between Second and Third streets. In the 1850 Census "Mattheyny McMurtry" was a "merchant miller," a native of Ireland, and age 40, slightly younger than Greer. But Meehan referred to McMurtry in her recollections: "at the juncture now of Main and Pike, stood the McMurtry four mill...."

On March 31, 1849 the plat for Greer's "first addition" to Covington was recorded at the Independence courthouse (DB 10, pp. 478-479). It covered lots west of Willard to Main, also south of Eighth, including a block east of Greer, and a segment south of Seventh (see plat 95 including M. H. Coat's subdivision, December 27, 1890, Covington court records). After Greer's death his second ("homestead") addition was recorded in Covington (plat 359, November, 1888). This covered lots between Craig and Willard, north of Eighth, to a southern boundary along Pike and then West Ninth street.

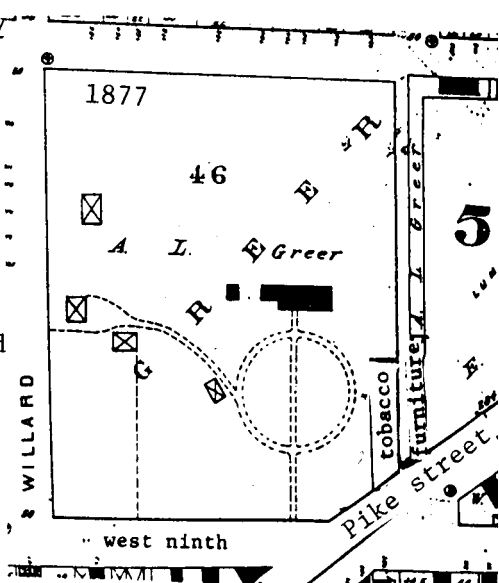
In the 1840s Greer acquired land which provided right-of-way for the Covington and Lexington railroad, which opened in 1854 between Covington and Lexington. In the 1840s were recorded, among others, these acquisitions: in 1843 from Eli Collins for \$691 20 acres with dwelling, part of A. P. Howell's farm which was located in the vicinity of the Nineteenth street overpass (DB 4, p. 235); in 1846 from the Cunningham family at \$3.00 per acre 144 acres located at the Licking river near the lands of George White, William S. Grant, and Milton Franks (DB 6, p. 445). In 1847, through Sheriff James G. Arnold's office, claims of Howell and the earlier owner Robert Wallace of 6 acres (DB 6, p. 463); in 1847 from Fred Cox for \$1000 for 100 acres on Banklick creek (DB 7, p. 105); in 1847 from Wallace for \$757.50 two and one-half acres west of where Wallace then resided (DB 7, p. 281); in 1848 from Dan Mooar (an attorney) for \$6,200 about 6 acres (real estate which Greer had just deeded to Mooar) described as located about a mile south of Covington, bounded on the east by the Banklick turnpike (now Madison); on the north by the old Howell property, on the south by A. W. Hicks' land, and also near real estate which Wallace had sold to Henry Horstmann (DB 8, p. 365).

Besides the Covington and Lexington railroad, Greer also provided financial organization for the Covington Locomotive and Manufacturing Works. But as far back as 1838-1840 Greer and partner Calvin Fletcher had acquired property which was occupied years later by the locomotive company. The property extended west 130 feet from Philadelphia street at the river and along Front street, and back to Third street. This had belonged to Thomas Bakewell who had to relinquish it to his brother William who in turn lost it to the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust company which transferred to another person before Greer gained title. This deed recording of 1847 was meant to nullify any lingering claim of Thomas Bakewell's wife (DB 7, p. 95). The company

also acquired the east side of Philadelphia below Third and even leased on the east of Bakewell street (DB 25, p. 286).

In 1854 Greer made a loan of \$9,937.64 through Dan Feger to the Locomotive company, and also obligated the debtor with interest payments of \$596 for each of 4 years (DB 23, p 384, 386, and 387). In 1854 the company showed a debt of \$100,000 to Samuel M. Moor in the form of 200 bonds worth \$500 each (DB 25, p 286). Then later in the same month is recorded the sale of the company to its creditors including A. L. Greer (\$15,000), Thomas Greer (\$3,100) and various banks, debts totalling over \$95,000 (DB 25, p. 325). Then in April 1855 is recorded the selling of the company to Cincinnati buyers for \$150,000 (DB, 62, p. 313). In brief the Covington Locomotive and Manufacturing Corporation (1853-1855) was organized in association with the Covington and Lexington railroad, both of which benefitted from the organizing force of Greer. And the company built and delivered to the C & L the following engines: Covington, Cynthiana, Paris, Lexington, M. M. Benton, and Sam J. Walker (John H. White, Cincinnati Locomotive Builders 1845-1868). These local manufacturers of railroad locomotives, which operated in the 1850s and 1860s, were also thwarted by business depression, and had to give way to "larger and older eastern manufacturers" (Carl W. Condit, The Railroad and the City, 1977).

On March 11, 1892 The Kentucky Post reported that (in connection with the tragic death of his son) John Greer had received "about \$20,000" from the sale of property A.L. Greer had owned at Cumberland Gap, and in Tennessee and Virginia (K. P. 3-11-92). On June 9, 1896 the paper stated that Judge Perkins had ordered the sale of remaining property in the Greer estate. In 1896 it was recorded that due to Circuit Court judgement, for \$17,250, Bradford Shinkle acquired the Greer Block, the n. e. corner of Fifth and Scott and the lot (which had had a tobacco factory) at the n. w. corner of Pike and Greer alley (DB 121, p. 1).



(John Boh)

HISTORICAL CONFEDERATION OF KENTUCKY (HCK) NORTHERN REGION

All historical and genealogical organizations, through their representatives, especially from the northern (8 county) region are invited to a meeting in Alexandria, Kentucky on Saturday, June 19, beginning at 10:00 a. m.

The meeting will be on the second floor of the old Campbell County Courthouse, which last year was converted into a museum, with the financial support of a Kentucky Bicentennial grant. In addition to discussion and business our host, the Campbell County Historical and Genealogical Society, will give a tour of the new facility.

Each organization should have some important ongoing project, or other business of significance to other organizations in the region. For instance, members of the Kenton County Historical Society, with the participation of members from other organizations in the region, will be issuing a new biannual history magazine beginning this year. And Campbell County will be preparing for its Bicentennial celebration which will take place in 1994. And the recently organized Northern Kentucky Afro-American Heritage Task Force has been making contacts and drawing interest in a long term effort to organize the collecting, copying, and preserving family papers and other heritage records. These are examples of projects in need of amplification at this regional meeting. Lunch can be had nearby. There will also be time for an afternoon session in and about the quaint old courthouse in Campbell county.

Representatives from historical, cultural, family, library etc., organizations are invited.

MEMBERSHIP

For only \$5.00 you can become an official member of the Kenton County Historical Society. Send check to the treasurer. The Kenton County Historical Society was organized under the sponsorship of the Kenton County Public Library and other community leaders to promote local and family history.

(If you have been a member, then check the address label to see if your membership has expired)

Kenton County Historical Society
P. O. Box 641
Covington, Ky 41012

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